

Black money scam

Page issues

The **black money scam**, sometimes also known as the "black dollar scam" or "wash wash scam", is a scam where con artists attempt to fraudulently obtain money from a victim by persuading him or her that piles of banknote-sized paper in a trunk or a safe are actually currency notes that have been dyed to avoid detection by authorities. The victim is persuaded to pay

fees and purchase chemicals to remove the dye, with the promise of a share in the proceeds.

The black money scam is a variation of what is known as advance fee fraud.

Phases of the scam

First contact

Typically the scammer will send out thousands, if not millions of e-mails to known and random e-mail addresses, hoping for a few replies. The initial message may read something like this:

I am a lawyer in Belgium and I am charged with seeking the rightful heir to certain assets which were deposited many years ago with a security company here in Brussels by a man who died a few years ago.

We have made extensive searches to find any living heirs, but with minimal success. A man with your name is named in the Will and Testament as being the only beneficiary of these assets. We believe that you may be the

person entitled and are writing to enquire if you have any dead relatives or friends who may have named you as a beneficiary of these assets in their will and testament. If so please let us have their names and any other information so we can check if you are indeed the beneficiary.

The amount of the assets is \$150,000 and one large trunk, contents unknown. Please reply immediately

Sometimes however, the scammer resorts to directly approaching the victim.

Advance fees: the fraud starts

As the communications between the two parties continue, it will become necessary for certain fees and expenses to be paid, including government taxes, or death duties. In reality, there are no such taxes to be paid. However the need to pay fees or taxes is used as an excuse to make any free funds vanish, and/or to extract funds from the victim.

A trunk full of black money?

Eventually by various means and devices the victim will be persuaded that the trunk contains a very large amount of cash which had a legitimate, or not so legitimate, reason for all this money to be in cash. Furthermore, the money has all been stained black or another color to avoid detection by customs. A valid reason for this will be given: "*The deceased traded in African artifacts and had to pay for some expensive items in cash before he died. To avoid customs problems and theft the money had to be stained black.*" The victim is assured that the chemical needed for washing the money is also in the trunk.

The victim may have already paid some money to pay fees and taxes, and he may now be invited to pay the shipping expenses of the trunk to his home country. Whether these are paid or not, the trunk will not be shipped and further sums will be demanded on various pretexts, such as taxes, security company fees, money transfer fees, legalization fees, export permissions, etc.

Victim goes to see the "money"

When at some point the victim is having doubts, or showing reluctance to pay any more, he will be invited to inspect the

contents of the safety deposit trunk himself. With much ceremony and pomp, the box will be opened to reveal the stained paper. The victim will be informed that these are stained with an almost unwashable color but that a chemical exists which can remove it.

Washing a small sample of the black "money"

Then the conman will produce a small vial of the washing liquid and ask the victim to select any stained bank note at random. This done, the conman proceeds to wash the banknote in the chemical, performing a

sleight of hand, substituting a real note which is washed. There will be insufficient liquid to wash any more money, or the conman may "accidentally" knock the bottle over on the floor.

More funds needed to pay for washing chemical fluid

The victim cannot take away the trunk, or any notes, since he is informed that the taxes have not been paid, but once the notes are "washed", it will be easy to pay the taxes and there will be money left over. The victim is persuaded that he must buy the chemical to wash the notes, and of

course the chemical cleaning fluid is "very expensive". Once again the victim parts with money to the fraudster. Sometimes the fraudsters will set up a website purporting to be a seller of the cleaning fluid, which obviously has such a unique and unusual name that it can not be found anywhere else. This adds to the credibility of the story and the victim may even contact the website directly to buy the fluid, allowing the conmen yet another chance to con the victim. Alternatively the conmen may also refer the victim to a specific online advertisement for the chemical and black money.

Delay after delay, more fees, no money

The fraudsters will continue to find excuses as to why the victim cannot have his money just yet, but will always promise it after one "last and absolutely final step", which obviously involves the payment of yet another fee by the victim. The scammers will continue to milk the victim until they are sure he has no more money, and that he cannot get any by begging and borrowing from friends or banks, or until the victim realizes that he is being scammed, and gets the police involved. Needless to say, the fraudsters

themselves, and the victim's money, are usually long gone by the time the police are involved.

Reporting of the crime

Most such frauds are not reported by the victims for several reasons. First, they may feel terribly ashamed that they could be so naïve. Second, many of the scams will involve the victim knowingly agreeing to receive the proceeds of a crime - e.g. he may be informed that it is drug money, tax evasion money, or simply stolen.

Sometimes the scammer will have persuaded the victim to incriminate

himself, e.g. by falsifying a document, or lying on a tax declaration etc. The victim may thus be reluctant to come forward and admit that he was knowingly participating in what he thought was a criminal scheme.

Terminology used in the scam

- The defaced money
 - Anti-breeze bank notes
 - Black Money
- The chemical
 - S.S.D. Solution
 - Vectrol Paste

- Tebi-Manetic
- Humine Powder
 - solid solution
 - Shiba / Fay
 - Motion
 - Decharge
 - Sahualla

Chemicals used

A Ghanaian native caught perpetrating the scam revealed to ABC News Chief Investigative Correspondent Brian Ross the tricks of the trade.^[1] Authentic hundred US dollar bills are coated with a protective layer of glue, and then dipped into a

solution of tincture of iodine.^[2] The bill, when dried, looks and feels like black sugar paper. The mass of notes are real sugar paper; when the victim picks a "note" for cleaning, it is switched with the iodine coated note. The "magic cleaning solution" is actually crushed Vitamin C tablets dissolved in water. In another arrest, ordinary raspberry drink mix was found to be the "magic cleaning solution". Now Ca(OH)₂ and Mg(OH)₂ are used and dissolve their note into these solutions

References

1. "The Secrets Behind the 'Black Money' Scam" . abcNEWS. Retrieved 2 December 2011.
2. "Black money cleaning scam – see how it's done" . AEC News Today. 20 September 2015.

External links

- Secrets Behind 'Black Money' Scam
ABC News
- Metropolitan Police Information on the fraud from the London Metropolitan Police Service
- BBC An article from the BBC on how a businessman was conned out of

\$742,000.

- Two conmen in dollar bill hoax arrested
Gulf News article from December 2003.
- Fraudaid How to do it.
- IOL Cops arrest 'black dollar' victim
October 2007

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["https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Black_money_scam&oldid=809304543"](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Black_money_scam&oldid=809304543)

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